

then eat it. One bird ate about 10 frogs in 23 min in this manner. Tadpoles that jumped out and hid within the hexagonal cracks of the dried patches of loam were not eaten by the ibis. I have seen black ibis infrequently in Trichy. They do not breed around here.

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9. NOTE ON BREEDING OF ANDAMAN TEAL *ANAS GIBBERIFRONS* IN SOUTH ANDAMAN ISLANDS, INDIA

The Andaman teal *Anas gibberifrons* occurs in the Andaman Islands and Great Cocos Islands. The species is not globally threatened, but is considered 'threatened' in the Andaman Islands because of agricultural development and disappearance of wetlands (Andrews and Whitaker 1994; Vijayan *et al.* 2000). However, very little information was available on its status and population until recently (Vijayan 1996; Vijayan and Sakthivel 1996; Vijayan *et al.* 2000). We report here an instance of breeding of the Andaman teal from the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park (MGMNP), Wandoor in the South Andaman Island.

MGMNP is spread over c. 281.5 sq. km and is comprised of 15 islands of the Labyrinth group, along the southwest coast of South Andaman Island. Only 60 sq. km of the Park is covered by landmass and the rest comprises open sea and creeks. The presence of marshy area and creeks in this Marine National Park provides an ideal breeding habitat for the Andaman teal (Harry Andrews *pers. comm.*, Vijayan *et al.* 2000). On May 28, 1999, while looking for sea snake nests in and around the Redskin Island, we approached a small, unnamed islet about 50 to 75 m away from the northeastern coast of Redskin Island. The islet is about 2-3 m high from the high tide line, about 7 m long and 3 m wide. On approaching the islet we flushed two teals, which we later identified as the Andaman teal (*Anas gibberifrons*). We searched the islet and found a neatly placed nest, with nine creamish eggs with small black spots all over, at

the base of a small shrub at the northern tip of the islet. The nest was c. 20 cm in diameter and consisted of dried grass, thin twigs and down feathers of the adult. The nest was easily accessible to human as well as water monitor lizard (*Varanus salvator andamanensis*). Before landing on this islet, we had sighted a water monitor lizard basking on a small shrub, but it disappeared into the water on our arrival. A little away from the teal nest, four nests of black-naped tern (*Sterna sumatrana*) were noticed. Each of them had one or two eggs that were white with prominent black spots. When we left the islet we saw the parent birds return to the nest. The next day, when we returned to the islet to photograph the nest of the Andaman teal, eight of the nine eggs had hatched and the ninth chick was emerging when we reached. The newly hatched chicks were grey, with a faint white circle around the eyes, and a grey beak. The available definite breeding records to date are from August to October (Ali and Ripley 1983; Vijayan *et al.* 2000).

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10. SOME OBSERVATIONS ON NESTING OF BONELLI'S EAGLE *HIERAAETUS FASCIATUS* (VIEILLOT)

During our regular treks for bird watching, we have observed a rare phenomenon not reported elsewhere. This year, for the third year in succession, the same pair of Bonelli's eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* (Vieillot) has nested at the same site, building their third nest on top of the previous two nests. The total height of the nest has now reached a massive 0.9 m; sticks of various trees gathered from the vicinity have been used to build this c. 1 m wide nest. The nest is at a height of c. 12 m on a jambul *Syzygium cumini* (L.) tree

on the slope of Pavangadh, 962 m above msl, 18 km northwest of Kolhapur city, and is lined with fresh green leaves. Nesting at the same site by the same pair is a phenomenon we have not observed in other Bonelli's eagle pairs elsewhere in the surrounding hilly region.

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11. STATUS OF WHITE-BELLIED SEA-EAGLE *HALIAEETUS LEUCOGASTER* IN RATNAGIRI DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA

The white-bellied sea-eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* is thinly, but widely distributed and is listed as vulnerable in the Indian RED DATA BOOK. No data on the status and population of this species is available. Its present status, along the 164 km coastline, in Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra, is given on the basis of a survey undertaken in the district during 1996-97 and 1997-98. We located 62 nests during our survey. The identity of the bird was confirmed from the HANDBOOK.

The species is resident along the seaboard and offshore islands from about 19° N of Mumbai down the west coast and up the east to

Bangladesh, Laccadive Is. (now Lakshadweep), Sri Lanka, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands and is vagrant in Gujarat (Ali and Ripley 1978).

We undertook a survey to determine the present status and distribution of the white-bellied sea-eagle in Ratnagiri district, as the species is found throughout the coastline of this district.

Ratnagiri district is situated in the Konkan region of Maharashtra State (16.30°-18.04° N and 73.02°-73.52° E). The coastline of the district is about 164 km long and is uniformly rocky and shallow. Various bluffs and promontories enclose small sandy beaches,